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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

3 December 1954

DRAFT BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: IAC-D-50/3, National Intelligence Objectives

REFERENCES: A. IAC-M-115, 4 August 1953, item 7.
B. IAC-M-171, 5 October 1954, item 4b
C. Memorandum from the Board, 1 December 1954.

BACKGROUND

1. IAC-D-50/3 was prepared by the Board in consultation with representatives of the IAC agencies and the IPC pursuant to IAC direction (IAC-M-115, 4 August 1953). Completion of the task was delayed by the necessity for a thorough re-examination of the subject, by the priority accorded to required estimates, and by difficulties in coordination discussed in Reference C. However, if IAC-D-50/3 is adopted, the proposed annual review of priority national intelligence objectives will not be so difficult and time-consuming a task.

SUBSTANCE

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2. The present text is fully agreed at the representatives level, except for the footnote on page. 7. The issue presented is a matter of

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DOCUMENT NO. 57
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒ D
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S ☒ C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 06/06/80

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vital principle. Inasmuch as the text is that of a directive rather than an estimate, the issue must be resolved in one way or the other.

3. DCID-4/2 ensures priority for any military intelligence collection requirement, regardless of its actual importance in relation to the national security considered from an over-all, NSC point of view. NSCID-4 requires that appropriate priority be accorded to the important non-military intelligence requirements indicated in NSC 162/2 and other NSC documents. The Service representatives have finally consented to an expansion of DCID-4/2 as proposed in IAC-D-50/3, Appendix B. The effect of their footnote on page 7, however, would be to perpetuate the automatic priority for all matters of military interest over all other security interests which is now derived from DCID-4/2.

4. The Board holds that Category I (highest priority) should be reserved for the three most critical intelligence problems: the likelihood of war, the Soviet capability to deliver a "knockout blow" against the United States, and the Soviet capability to prevent the delivery of such a blow against the USSR. To generalize the last two into an all-inclusive reference to Soviet military capabilities, as is proposed by the Service representatives, would violate the general principle of discrimination between degrees of criticality in the determination of priorities. It would also violate the IAC's explicit instruction to the Board to formulate priority objectives in such a way as to enable the

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IAC to determine the priority of guided missiles in relation to other topics (IAC-M-171, 5 October 1954, item 4b).

5. The State Department representative supported the Board in this matter, but held that, if the Service representatives' proposal was adopted by the IAC, item II(b) should also be raised to Category I. The Service members of the IAC are likely to make this concession to State in order to enlist its support for their proposed amendment. The position which Mr. Armstrong would take in such circumstances is uncertain.

6. The Board recommends that the Director adopt the Board's position in this matter, and that he carry the issue to the NSC, if necessary. [The Assistant Directors for Current Intelligence, Research and Reports, and Scientific Intelligence concur in this recommendation.]

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